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Name: James J. Dade

Signature: _____

Date: January 3, 2007

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Inventor : Masaaki Oka
 Serial No. : 10/730,881
 Filed : December 9, 2003
 Title : METHOD AND APPARATUS ...

January 3, 2007

Mail Stop: Amendments
 Commissioner for Patents
 P.O. Box 1450
 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

S I R:

In order to comply with discretionary regulations 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98, attached hereto is a copy of Form PTO-1449 and copies of the non-US documents (if any) listed thereon. These documents contain information which the Examiner may consider to be important in deciding whether to issue a patent in the instant application.

Attached is a copy of a Communication pursuant to Article 96(2) EPC dated October 20, 2006, from corresponding European Patent Application Number 03 028 249.5-2223.

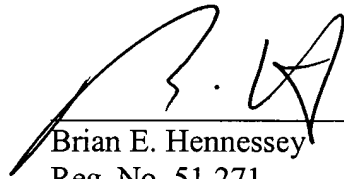
The present Information Disclosure Statement is being submitted in compliance with 37 CFR 1.56 as an Examiner might consider any cited document important in deciding whether to allow the application to issue as a patent, but the citation of each document is not to be construed

as an admission that such document is necessarily relevant or prior art. No representation is intended that the cited documents represent the results of a complete search, and it is anticipated that the Examiner in the normal course of examination, will make an independent search and will determine the best prior art consistent with 37 CFR 1.104 (a), and in the course of such search will review for relevance every document cited on the attached form even if not initialed.

As this statement is filed prior to issuance of a first Office Action, no fee is due. However, any fee determined to be due with this statement maybe charged to Deposit Account 50-1290. Each item of information contained in this information disclosure statement was first cited in a communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application not more than three months prior to the filing of the information disclosure statement.

Early and favorable consideration is respectfully solicited.

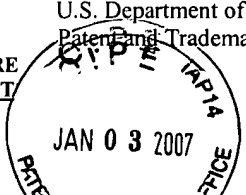
Respectfully submitted,



Brian E. Hennessey
Reg. No. 51,271

CUSTOMER NO.: 026304
Telephone: (212) 940-8800
Fax: (212) 940-8986
DOCKET NO.: SCEP 20.778

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1449/PTO	U.S. Department of Commerce Patent and Trademark Office	Application No. : 10/730,881
INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT BY APPLICANT Sheet 1 of 1		Filing Date : December 9, 2003
		First Named Inventor: Masaaki Oka
		Group Art Unit : 2613
		Examiner Name :
		Attorney Docket No. : SCEP 20.778

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

Examiner Initials	Cite No. ¹	U.S. Patent Document	Kind Code if known ²	Name of Patentee or Applicant of Cited Document	Date of Publication of Cited Document MM-DD-YYYY	Pages, Columns Lines Where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear

FOREIGN DOCUMENTS

Examiner Initials	Cite No. ¹	Foreign Patent Document Office ³ Number ⁴ Kind Code ⁵ (if known)	Country	Name of Patentee or Applicant of Cited Document	Date of Publication of Cited Document MM-DD-YY/Y	Pages, Columns Lines Where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear

Other Prior Art-Non Patent Literature Documents

Examiner Initials	Cite No.	Include name of the author (in CAPITAL LETTERS), title of the article (when appropriate), title of the item (book, magazine, journal, serial, symposium, catalog, etc.), data, page(s), volume-issue number(s), publisher, country, where published, source.	Applicant check here if English language translation attached
		Communication pursuant to Article 96(2) EPC for corresponding European Patent Application Number 03 028 249.5-223, dated October 20, 2006	
Examiner Signature		Date Considered	

Examiner: Initial if reference considered, whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609. Draw a line through citation if not in conformance and not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.
¹Unique citation designation number. ²See attached Kinds of U.S. Patent Documents. ³Enter Office that Issued the document, by the two-letter code (WIPO Standard ST.3). ⁴For Japanese patent documents, the indication of the year of the reign of the Emperor must precede the serial number of the patent document. ⁵Kind of document by the appropriate symbols as indicated on the document under WIPO Standard ST.1⁶ if possible. ⁶Applicant is to place a check mark here if English language Translation is attached. Burden Hour Statement: This form is estimated to take .2 hours to complete. Time will vary depending upon the needs of the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you are required to complete this form should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, Patent and Trademark Office, Washington, DC 20231. Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of Information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. SEND TO: Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, DC 20231.